

SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE

Continued from page 11

Conspicuous Nose Pores

How to reduce them

Complexions otherwise flawless are often ruined by conspicuous nose pores. In such cases the small muscular fibres of the nose have become weakened and do not keep the pores closed as they should be. Instead these pores collect dirt, clog up, and become enlarged.

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Wring a cloth from very hot water, lay it with Woodbury's Facial Soap, then hold it to your face. When the heat has expanded the pores, rub in very gently a fresh lather of Woodbury's. Repeat this hot water and lather application several times, stopping at once when your nose feels sensitive. Then finish by rubbing the nose for a few minutes with a lump of ice. Woodbury's Facial Soap cleanses the pores. This treatment with it strengthens the muscular fibres so that they can contract properly. But do not expect to change in a week a condition resulting from years of neglect. Use this treatment persistently. It will gradually reduce the enlarged pores until they are inconspicuous.

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I heard about the book-writing cook Providence had sent you."

"You would have found us on the porch with outstretched arms," Magee assured her.

It was on Kendrick that Mrs. Quimby showered her attentions, and when the group rose to seek the station, amid a consultation of watches that recalled the commuter who rose at dawn to play tag with a flippant train, Magee heard her say to the railroad man in a heartfelt aside:

"I don't know as I can ever thank you enough, Mr. Kendrick, for putting new hope into Quimby. You'll never understand what it means, when you've given up, and your life seems all done and wasted, to hear that there's a chance left."

"Won't I?" replied Kendrick warmly. "Mrs. Quimby, it will make me a very happy man to give your husband his chance."

THE first streaks of dawn were in the sky when the hermits of Baldpate filed through the gate into the road, waving goodbye to Quimby and his wife, who stood in their doorway for the farewell. Down through sleepy little Asquewan Falls they paraded, meeting here and there a tired man with a lunch basket in his hand, who stepped to one side and frankly stared while the odd procession passed.

In the station Magee encountered an old friend, he of the mop of ginger-colored hair. The man who had complained of the slowness of the village gazed with wide eyes at Magee.

"I figured," he said, "that you'd come this way again. Well, I must say you've put a little life into this place. If I'd known when I saw you here the other night all the exciting things you had up your sleeve, I'd a gone right up to Baldpate with you."

"But I hadn't anything up my sleeve," protested Magee.

"Maybe," replied the agent, winking. "There's some pretty giddy stories going round about the carryings on up at Baldpate. Shots fired, and strange lights flashing—doggone it! the only thing that's happened here in years, and I wasn't in on it! I certainly wish you'd put me wise to it."

"By the way," inquired Magee, "did you notice the passengers from here on the tenth-train last night?"

"Tenth-train," repeated the agent. "Say, what sort of hours do you think I keep? A man has to get some sleep, even if he does work for a railroad. I wasn't here at tenth-train last night. Young Cal Hunt was on duty then. He's home and in bed now."

No help there. Into the night the girl and the two hundred thousand had fled together, and Magee could only wait, and wonder, as to the meaning of that flight.

TWO drooping figures entered the station, the Mayor and his faithful lieutenant Max. The dignity of the former had faded like a flower, and the same withered smile might have been applied with equal force to the accustomed jauntiness of Lou.

"Good morning," said Magee in greeting. "Taking an early train too, eh? Have a pleasant night?"

"Young man," replied Cargan, "if you've ever put up at a hotel in a town the size of this, called the Commercial House, you know that last question has just one answer, —manslaughter! I heard a minister say once that all drummers are bound for hell. If they are, it'll be a pleasant change for 'em."

Max delved beneath his overcoat, and brought forth the materials for a cigarette, which he rolled between yellow fingers. "If I was a drummer," he said dolefully, "one breakfast—was that what they called it, Jim?—one breakfast like we just passed through would drive me into the awful habit of reading one of these here books of 'Drummers' Yarns.'"

"Sorry," smiled Magee. "We had an excellent breakfast at Mrs. Quimby's. Really, you should have stayed. By the way, where is Bland?"

"Got shaky in the knees," said Cargan. "Afraid of the reformers. Ain't had much experience in these things, or he'd know he might just as well tremble at the approach of a bluebottle fly. We put him on a train going the other direction from Reuton early this morning. He thinks he'd better seek his fortune elsewhere." He leaned in heavy confidence toward Magee. "Say, young fellow," he whispered, "put me wise. That little sleight of hand game you worked last night had me dizzy. Where's the coin? Where's the girl? What's the game? Take the boodle and welcome,—it ain't mine,—but put me next to what's doing, so I'll know how my instalment of this serial story ought to read."

"Mr. Cargan," replied Magee, "you know

as much about that girl as I do. She asked me to get her that money, and I did."

"But what's your place in the game?"

"A looker-on in Athens," returned Magee; "translated, a guy who had bumped into a cyclone and was sitting tight waiting for it to blow over. I—I took a fancy to her, as you might put it. She wanted the money. I got it for her."

"A pretty fairy story, my boy!" the Mayor commented.

"Absolutely true," smiled Magee. "What do you think of that for an explanation, Lou?" inquired Cargan. "She asked him for the money, and he gave it to her!"

Max leered. "Say, a Broadway chorus would be pleased to meet you, Magee," he commented.

"Don't tell any of your chorus friends about me," replied Magee. "I might not always prove so complacent. Every man has his moments of falling for romance. Even you probably fell once—and what a fall was there!"

"Can the romance stuff!" pleaded Max. "This chilly railway station wasn't meant for such giddy language."

Wasn't it? Magee looked round at the dingy walls, at the soiled timecards, at the disreputable stove. No place for romance? It was here he had seen her first, in the dusk, weeping bitterly over the seemingly hopeless task in which he was destined to serve her. No place for romance—and here had begun his life's romance! The blue, blithe sailor still stood at attention in the "See the World" poster. Magee winked at him. He knew about it all—he knew, he knew! He knew how alluring she had looked in the blue corduroy suit, the bit of cambric pressed agonizingly to her face. Verily, even the sailor of the poster saw the world and all its glories!

The agent leaned his face against the bars. "Your train," he called, "is crossing the Main-st. trestle."

THEY filed out upon the platform, Magee carrying Mrs. Norton's luggage amid her effusive thanks. On the platform waited a stranger equipped for travel. It was Max who made the great discovery.

"By the lord Harry!" he cried. "It's the Hermit of Baldpate Mountain!"

And so it was, his beard gone, his hair clumsily hacked, his body garbed in the height of an old and ludicrous fashion, his face set bravely toward the cities once more.

"Yes," he said, "I walked the floor, thinking it all over. I knew it would happen, and it has. The winters are hard, and the sight of you—it was too much. The excitement, the talk—it did for me, did for my oath. So I'm going back to her—back to Brooklyn for Christmas."

"A merry one to you!" growled Cargan. "Maybe," replied Peters. "Very likely, if she's feeling that way. I hope so. I ain't giving up the hermit job altogether: I'll come back in the summers, to my postcard business. There's money in it, if it's handled right. But I've spent my last winter on that lonesome hill."

"As author to author," asked Magee, "how about your book?"

"There won't be any mention of that," the hermit predicted, "in Brooklyn. I've packed it away. Maybe I can work on it summers, if she doesn't come up here with me and insist on running my hermit business for me. I hope she won't,—it would sort of put a crimp in it,—but if she wants to I won't refuse. And maybe that book'll never get done. Sometimes, as I've sat in my shack at night and read, it's come to me that all the greatest works since the world began have been those that never got finished."

The Reuton train roared up to them through the gray morning, and paused impatiently at Upper Asquewan Falls. Aboard it clambered the hermits, amateur and professional. Magee, from the platform, waved goodbye to the agent standing forlorn in the station door. He watched the building until it was only a blur in the dawn. A kindly feeling for it was in his heart. After all, it had been in the waiting room—

CHAPTER XX. The Admiral's Game

THE village of Upper Asquewan Falls gave a correct imitation of snow upon the desert's face, and was no more. Bidding a reluctant goodbye to up-State romance, Magee entered the solitary day coach that, with a smoker, made up the local to Reuton. He spent a few moments adjusting Mrs. Norton to her new environment, and listened to her voluble expressions of joy in the fact that her boarding house loomed ahead. On his way he paused at the seat occupied by

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